

adverse criticism, it safely can be stated that criticism has created more literature than it has destroyed and has developed more genius than it has quenched.

Now it requires no subtle reasoning to prove that, if criticism is a benefit in literature and oratory, where man has opportunity to revise and correct his productions, it becomes an absolute necessity where excellence in public speaking is to be reached. And it is just because of this, that we think the powers of our Philosophical and Literary Society were nowhere wiser in their day and generation, than when they instituted the office of critic, whose function it was to overhaul the literary productions and oratorical efforts of the evening.

A misconception among some of our students regarding this office seems to have germinated and sprung up, at first the blade, then the ear and now the full corn in the ear, that the remarks of the critic should be merely something to amuse, and that the critic is a success only so far as he has succeeded in entertaining the society by giving it a specimen of witty banter, mixed perhaps with unjust ridicule of some more or less unpopular student. You frequently hear the remark from students as they wend their way through the corridors after a meeting: "Pretty dry criticism, too matter-of-fact. Why didn't he get one off on Mr. B., etc?" This is surely an erroneous conception.

Each has his own peculiar mannerisms, unknown to himself, but which go far to mar him as a public speaker. Peculiarities of pronunciation, peculiarities of gesture in the manner of expressing our thoughts, fallacies in reasoning, misstatements of facts are common to most, if not all of us. Now can anything be more important than that now, when our habits of speech are in the moulding, we should have our attention called to those things which injure the effect of what we have to say? The true function of the critic is to call our attention to those things which seem to him defects, and give us an opportunity, if we have sense enough, to reform and improve our time.

It may not be amiss here to point out one or two of the